

Kogarah Historical Society Inc

Carss Cottage Museum – Carss Park
Postal Address PO Box 367, Kogarah 1485
www.kogarah.historicalsociety.com.au

Patron:

President: Mavis Ward

Newsletter

Sept/October 2016

Volume 8 No 4



Painting by Kevin Best 'Drover' – see inside for story

Meetings and Speakers

Thursday 8 September 2016

**Gail Davis, Senior Archivist,
AONSW - A Brush with Fame**

Thursday 13 October 2016

**Doug Minty, Clockmaker - *The
History of Time***

Meetings start at 2 pm in the School of Arts, Bowns Rd/Queens Ave Kogarah. Enjoy the speaker, then chat over afternoon tea. A short business meeting follows. Apologies for non-attendance at the above meetings should go to the Vice President, Beverley Earnshaw (9546 1091). Visitors welcome.

Find us on Facebook



Mondays at the Museum

26 September 2016 – Beverley Earnshaw OAM

We try to persuade Beverley Earnshaw to speak to us at least once each year and we always look forward to hearing her. This time her title is “Whatever Happened to the First Fleet?” As always the meeting will start at 10 am with morning tea in the courtyard and we will stay outside for the speaker if the weather permits. Cost is \$5 which covers morning tea and gives you the chance to win a door prize. **Please book** as space is limited and it helps with catering. To reserve your place, ring Adele Ryan on 9529 6730 or leave a message on her answering machine.

Sunday Museum Roster

Sept 2016		Oct 2016	
4 th	Carole Tier & Ken Grieve	2 nd	Wendy Agzarian & Elaine Filewood
11 th	Mavis Ward & Betty Reynolds	9 th	Adele Ryan & Joe Spinelli
18 th	Betty Goodger & Pat Young	16 th	Betty Goodger & Gill Whan
25 th	Warren & Irene Selmon	23 rd	Warren & Irene Selmon
		30 th	Leo & Cath Sullivan.

Hours 1 pm – 5 pm (1 pm – 4pm from June - October).

Problems – If you need to exchange days with someone please try and do so between yourselves, otherwise contact Wendy Agzarian (9774 3667)

Committee 2016 (*denotes Executive)

President:*	Mavis Ward	Ph: 9546 5704
Vice Presidents:*	Beverley Earnshaw	Ph: 9546 1091
Secretary & Public Officer:*	Gill Whan	Ph: 9546 4623
Treasurer:*	Cath Sullivan	Ph: 9579 6149

Committee Members: Wendy Agzarian, Beryl Butters, Trudy Johns, Glynn Pulling, Robert McGarn, Rodger Robertson, Adele Ryan, Pat Young

Committee meeting venues

- 5 Sep 2.00 pm Pat Young, 25 Culver St., Monterey (8593 1898)
10 Oct 2.00 pm Beverley Earnshaw, 15 Hamer St., Kogarah Bay (9546 1091)
7 Nov 2.00 pm Gill Whan, 11 Dewrang Street, Carss Park (9546 4623)

Welcome

New members – Heather Campbell, Cheryle and Gerald Collins, John Fountain and Blythe Muirhead.

Kogarah's Amazing Achievers

Kevin Best OAM – Artist

By Beverley Earnshaw

The next few issues our newsletter will present a series of articles on people who were born in Kogarah, lived in Kogarah or went to school there. These are people who left Kogarah to gain fame and fortune in the wider world and whose association with Kogarah has been forgotten.

Have you ever received a Christmas Card, a Calendar, a biscuit tin or a place mat bearing an image of the Australian bush or a rural scene from outback Australia? Closer scrutiny of the picture might have revealed the artist's signature, *Kevin Best*.

Kevin Best was one of the finest landscape artists of our time. During his talented career his works captured the true spirit of the outback, whether it be the bush, the high country or the thundering surf. And **Kevin Best was a Kogarah boy!**

Kevin was born at Hamilton NSW on January 27, 1932. In 1939 the family moved to Rockdale and later to Edward Street, Kogarah (now Carlton), and Kevin was educated at Marist Brothers Kogarah.

Even as a young child he loved to draw. At an early age he joined the local scouts and his excursions to the bush awakened in him a profound appreciation of the great outdoors. He always had his pencils and sketchbook with him to capture images of the trees, birds and native fauna.

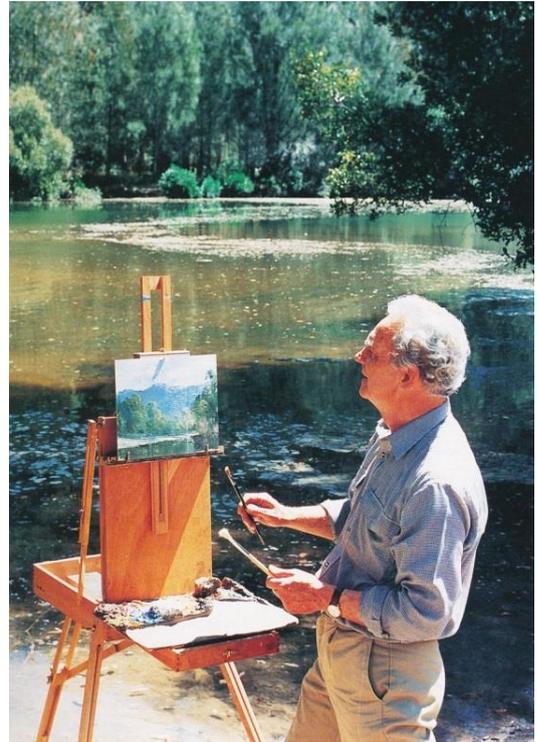
At the age of 16 his father found him a job in a stockbroker's office where he soon discovered the stockmarket was not a place where people bought and sold cattle. His love of drawing never ceased. In about 1973 his sister asked him to paint a picture for her silver wedding. He loved every minute of painting that picture and was hooked on painting for life.

He painted at home in the evenings, then during his lunch hours and after work he trudged around the galleries offering his works for exhibition and sale. Then one glad day Royce Gallery in the Rocks agreed to hang one of his paintings and it sold within a few days for \$90.

He entered his paintings in charity exhibitions and his work began to sell consistently. It was decision time. After 25 years working in the stockmarket, on September 30, 1977 he gave up his job and 'followed his star'. It was a momentous decision as he had a wife and six young children but he set out with his family's full support.

Kevin roved the outback. His travels covered the high country where he observed the herds of brumbies sheltering in secluded grassy pockets, always close to water. These inspired many of his paintings. He found river beds lined with red gums, craggy peaks and emerald green meadows dotted with sheep and kangaroos. His painting 'Wattle Time' captured the light diffusing through the tree tops as the golden yellow blossoms transformed the grey bushland.

At the 'holding yards' he boiled the billy with the drovers and stockmen and lower down he painted the dairy herds assembled at milking time, but his favourite subject was always the brumbies of the high country. In his book, *A Brush with Light*, he tells their story.



The word “brumby” (meaning wild horse) originated in mountain folklore. A certain Colonel Brumby (a horse breeder in the Monaro district) grew so disillusioned in the struggle with the elements, that one day he threw open the gates, hunted the horses free and walked off the property. Later, when these animals were seen in the high country, stockmen would say “There’s the Brumby mob”, until eventually they just became known as “brumbies”.



Most of Kevin’s paintings have a back story. Here in his painting *Trouble Ahead* he depicts a scene of a young frisky stallion arriving to challenge an old stallion for control of his brood mares.

His boundless enthusiasm and extensive knowledge of the bush was expressed in his paintings and his popularity grew. So great was the demand for his works by the galleries that sometimes he was hanging pictures before they were even dry. He had 30 one-man exhibitions which were very successful.

In 1995 he published his pictorial autobiography *A Brush with Light*.

On January 26, 2005 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia ‘for service to the arts as a landscape painter and to the community through fundraising support for a range of charitable organizations’. In 2010 he was selected as one of Australia’s ‘top ten’ artists.

Kevin Best died on July 31, 2012 but will be remembered in his thousands of beautiful Australian paintings which have found their way all over the world.



Lest we Forget

18 August 2016 is the 50th anniversary of the battle of Long Tan which took place in Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

The Vietnam War was the longest war Australia has been involved in – ten years, 1962-1972. We pause to remember all those service men and women who went to Vietnam and we remember in particular with honour and respect, the 521 Australians who lost their lives in the conflict.

The History of Moorefield Racecourse (1888-1951)

Ebook launched by Anne Field, author.



This ebook was launched on 14 July 2016, being the 65th anniversary of the last race meeting. The launch was at James Cook Boys High School, Kogarah. Robert McGarn, a former student, represented the Society.

The hard copy book will be launched on 13 October next at Moorefield Bowling Club, 40 French Street Kogarah at 2 pm. **This was the date of the first race meeting in 1888.**



Anne Field with Linda Beattie

The author, Anne Field, KHS member, a former secondary teacher, member of the St George Hospital Board and a local Councillor on both Rockdale and Kogarah Councils, is a keen racing fan and has been researching the book for many years.

The launch was well attended by the public and by local Members of State Parliament, local Councillors, local Council Officials and High School representatives from both James Cook Boys and Moorefield Girls High Schools.

Racing representatives attending included the jockey Ray Selkrig, who rode at the Racecourse and who rode the 1961 Melbourne Cup winner, Lord Fury and Rick Buckland, the grandson of Clarence the Clocker, a famous racing & media personality up until his retirement in 1982. Clarence the Clocker (the name came from a 1949 Bing Crosby song) was born Arthur Davies at Rockdale and started his career timing (or clocking) horses at the Racecourse for the latter champion trainer Tommy Smith, father of present champion trainer, Gai Waterhouse.

The total racecourse area was very large and also included the old nine-hole Kogarah Golf Course. The site now comprises St George TAFE, James Cook Boys and Moorefield Girls High School and houses on the Moorefield estate.

John Dwyer who played at the old Golf Course also attended.



Ray Selkrig and Rick Buckland

The Racecourse fostered local trainers and nearby stables and created local support industries. The Course was unusual as it had a hill in it.

Some horses came by train to a siding at Kogarah Station and swam at the nearby beach.

There were past plans, not fulfilled, to extend the Racecourse to include nearby Scarborough Park as well. The Racecourse ceased being used completely about 1955 and redevelopment of the area started in about 1956.

There was also an exhibit of old racing programmes, newspaper clippings and information on the Racecourse. A horse shoe was dug up in a house on the Moorefield estate so there may be more reminders of the course still buried there.

Information on the online edition can be found at the website, www.annefield.net.au

Robert McGarn

(The launch of the hard copy of the book will be on 13 October at 2pm in the Moorefield Bowling Club when the book will be on sale)

Barnardo Ball Boys

By Gill Whan, taken from an article in the Daily Telegraph UK

The ball boys and girls at Wimbledon are much admired for their skill and precision during the annual Wimbledon tournament but who knew that from 1946 – 1967, the ball boys (no girls until 1977) came from the William Baker Technical School, known as Goldings, a residential school run by Barnardo's in Hertfordshire. This year they were reunited after 50 years, to relive their memories.

Each day of the tournament the boys made a 2 ½ hour journey by coach after being woken by the School's customary bugle call at 6 am. Selection was apparently quite casual, the requirement being to be fit and agile, able to catch and throw balls and have the ability to stand perfectly still on court during play to avoid distracting the competitors. They had only two weeks training and were given advice to be polite, stay alert and do their best. There was no payment for the fortnight's work but the boys found ways around this, buying photos of star players for three pennies, getting them signed and selling them on for a shilling. As one of them said "it was an early lesson in entrepreneurship useful in later life."

These days the ball boys and girls undergo a gruelling selection process with written tests on the rules of tennis and five month of training. They also receive expenses.



Goldings boys being trained to be Wimbledon ball boys at their school in 1958

The 'boys' at the reunion, now in their 70s and 80s, remember long days and a 'uniform' of long grey flannel trousers and heavy cotton shirt with black canvas plimsolls. These were part of their 'best' school clothes and they were taught to always look their best. Clive Gillingham, a ball boy at three tournaments, revealed how this was done – "Every night, creases were smoothed from our trousers which were placed between lengths of plywood with our mattress on top." These days ball boys and girls are dressed by American designer Ralph Lauren.

The boys had their favourite players and recalled Lew Hoad, then world No 1, giving them bottles of cold Robinsons Barley Water at the end of one long match. Peter Knight, 86 years remembered Dorothy Bundy, an American former world No 6, who gave him her racquet as a present after her practice partner had failed to show and he filled in, hitting balls to her while she practised different strokes.

All agreed that the experience was a great confidence builder, they slipped naturally into coping with the pressure of being on court watched by thousands.

One can only imagine the contrast between their institutional lives and the glamour of the Wimbledon tournament, but what a happy reunion.

KENNETH SLESSOR AND KOGARAH

FIVE BELLS

*Time that is moved by little fidget wheels
Is not my Time, the flood that does not flow.
Between the double and the single bell
Of a ship's hour, between a round of bells
From the dark warship riding there below,
I have lived many lives, and this one life
Of Joe, long dead, who lives between five bells.*

Five Bells is perhaps the most famous of Kenneth Slessor's poems. Each visit to the Opera House and sight of the beautiful tapestry brings his name to our memory.

Kenneth Adolphe Schloesser was born in East Orange on 27 March 1901 but his father, Robert Schloesser was born in England in 1865. His ancestors had been musicians in Dormstadt in Hesse but moved from Germany to England in 1853. Robert became a civil and mining engineer and traveled for his work to Africa and China before coming to Australia in 1888. In the 1890s he was working in the Lucknow mines. Being so close to Orange, it is no surprise that he met and married "The Belle of Orange", Margaret Ella Marian McInnes. Her life span was 1873 to 1971, Robert's was 1865 to 1958.

Two boys were born – Kenneth was born in 1901, the second son and eldest of three surviving children.

Robert took his family to England and they stayed for about a year, but were certainly back in Australia by May 1909 because Kenneth was writing letters from a house named "Islay" in Belgrave Street in Kogarah. It was on the south side of the street. His mother always gave a Scottish name to her house.

In 1911 Kenneth began a new notebook and headed it, **Ken Schlessor, Upper Third, Kogarah Public School**. A later note shows, *Leave Public School Friday 21 March 1911*.

The family moved and Kenneth then attended Chatswood Preparatory School in Mowbray Street.

In 2016, Kogarah Council began a Kogarah Plaques Program marking places of significance in the Kogarah local government area. The first plaque is in Kogarah Town Square, which was the site of the house in Belgrave Street, and honours the poet, Kenneth Slessor.

The other nine plaques are to be

2. Kogarah School of Arts
3. St George Hospital
4. Steam Tram Terminus
5. Christina Stead
6. Taren Point Punt
7. Bidy Giles
8. Tow Weiry (Tom Ugly)
9. Bald Face Reserve
10. Drake's Oyster Barges

In 1914 at the start of World War 1, Robert anglicised their name from the German Schloesser. When Kenneth Slessor left school in 1918, he learnt shorthand and typing and became a journalist, working for the Daily Telegraph, the Sun and the Melbourne Punch. He



joined the idiosyncratic Smith’s Weekly in 1927 and was editor from 1935 to 1940. The majority of his poetry was written in those years. In 1940, WW11, he was appointed official war correspondent by the Commonwealth Government. His experiences in the Middle East inspired the poem, Beach Burial.

All writings about him stress his dapper appearance and smart dressing, especially his bow-tie. His flat in North Sydney looked onto the Harbour and must have been the inspiration for Five Bells. He was awarded an OBE in 1959 for his services to literature.

Even if Slessor only lived in Kogarah for possibly three years, it is very uplifting for Kogarah to claim a poet of his stature.

REFERENCES

Kenneth Slessor : a biography, by Geoffery Dutton 1991 pp 12, 15, 16.
 Sands Directory 1909-1911
 Kogarah Council Kogarah Plaques Program

Betty Goodger



Trivia Quiz
 By Rodger Robertson

New Zealand

1. The NZ Parliament building in Wellington is called the
2. What was PM Muldoon’s nickname?
3. Who said “every time a New Zealander immigrates to Australia the average IQ of both nations’ increases”?
4. Mt Egmont was named by Captain Cook but it is now called
5. Oxford and Cambridge are not on the same Island- which is on the North Island?
6. Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe are what?
7. The body of water between the two Islands is called.....?
8. What town sits near the Remarkables and Lake Wakatipu?
9. How many trees are there on “One Tree Hill” in Auckland?
10. Napier had a huge earthquake in 1934- as a result of this it is now famous for what?

Answers:

1. Beehive
2. Pegg
3. Muldoon
4. Taranaki
5. Cambridge on the North and Oxford on the South.
6. Volcanos
7. Cook Strait
8. Queenstown
9. None – the one was cut down several times over the last 200 years. But in June 2016 nine new trees were planted on the hill. So zero or nine are right?
10. Art Deco style of buildings.



Member Profile



Wendy Agzarian joined Kogarah Historical Society in 2014 causing a ‘frisson’ of excitement when we learned that she is a descendant of Amelia Claggett who married James Carss. She was immediately involved with the Society and interested in the Museum, taking part in running the tours and now accepting responsibility for organizing them. She joined the Committee in 2016 and we look forward to her continued participation in the Society. This is her story:

I grew up in Railway Parade, Kogarah in a house that my Grandfather, Charles Claggett built or bought in the early 1900s. My mother had lived there in a large family of 9 children. After she married my father, John Bastock, they bought the house for \$1500, shortly before I was born. Another aunt owned a house two doors up the street with all her family. The walk to either Kogarah or Rockdale was a well known trip in our family.



2 Kogarah Parade, bought for \$1500 in 1948



Vera Claggett

My mother and her siblings went to Kogarah Primary School as did my brother, sister and myself. We three children all went off to high schools but my mother had never had the chance as she was taken out of school at the age of twelve to become a companion to her aunt, Mrs Amelia Carss who was living alone at Carss Cottage. That was the end of my mother’s education apart from a very interesting time at Carss Cottage, where she learnt to fish, open oysters off the rocks, swim very well and learn lots about the natural history of the area. She made up for the schooling she had missed by reading every book, every one of our school text books and doing every crossword.

My father also grew up in a large family where he was the eldest. By the time he was 14 the family really needed him to go out to work and he really wanted to join the Navy. The Navy wouldn’t take him for another year, so, as he was always very artistically talented, he found work in a Commercial Art Studio where he learnt to paint signs, do commercial advertising and also neon signs and photography which was all rather new in those days. When he did join the Navy he became the unofficial photographer and compiled an amazing collection of photographs which he used in later life to write two books *Australian Ships of War* and *Ships of the Australian Station*. These are still held in the State Library. He also has many of his paintings of Naval ships in boardrooms and in the Maritime Museum.

He did his Naval Training on the last Training sailing ship, which he loved. He learnt lots about tying ropes and sails and scrubbing decks and climbing up to tops of masts [which he never quite got over, because he was forever climbing over the roof even at the age of eighty]. He then spent ten years in the Navy and saw the world until he was discharged with damage to one eye, right in the middle of the Depression. He had been trained as an electrician but his qualifications weren’t recognised and he was unable to find a job. By now he had married my mother and they

had two small children. It was a terrible time to be out of work and he did anything he could find. He started doing local signs and the Picture Theatre signs each week. Quite often the people couldn't pay him or paid him in kind. Rockdale and all the Cinemas along the railway line often had Dad and his ladder painting up their latest release.

My father always encouraged us to be creative and both my sister and I had our father's talent. I remember when I was very young, in church, Dad would make me sit quietly by providing a pencil and a few pieces of paper and telling me to draw. I never remembered what the sermon was about but could do a pretty good drawing of the ladies hats in front.

I was the youngest child with a big gap between me and my brother and sister. After going to Kogarah Primary School, I went to Moorefield Girls High School which was pretty new and sparse. No trees, hot and dry and the boy's school was far enough away to never be able to speak to them.

My father didn't believe in girls having much education –because they just got married! He expected me to leave school at 15, as my sister had 11 years previously. He was not going to change even though the world had. I was not sorry to leave school, and luckily I managed to get a place in the National Art School—there weren't many other alternatives and it was a big relief.

I spent two years at the Kogarah Campus in Montgomery St. and then went to East Sydney Technical College. It was a culture shock to be in a room of 15 year olds balancing their cigarettes on their easels, including the teacher, and seeing the first nude male models. In those days, I had probably never seen a nude man, so an aged rather droopy ballet dancer didn't enthuse me!



After that life began! I got a job in an art studio as a Fashion Artist doing the daily advertising for newspapers from all the big department stores. I was illustrating all their latest fashions and seasonal trends, everything from furs to underwear. Remember Anthony Horderns, Waltons, Snows, Curzons & Buckingham's, even Farmers? It was fun being paid to draw dresses and adding all the patterns and style, but hard work as we didn't go home till finished and deadlines for the printers were always far too short. I then started freelancing for myself which meant working from home but knocking on doors for work. I illustrated children's books, greeting cards and magazines and still did some advertising.

Sadly as photographic printing developed, computers came in and all those department stores closed or merged. My career became virtually redundant.

When my work began to slow down and I had a young daughter, I went looking for a part time job. I had joined WIRES, the wildlife rescue group, as a volunteer. As I was working from home, I had time to look after injured animals and feed babies. They needed someone to employ as a night time phone person who could give advice and organise rescues so this was ideal for me. I did this job for 15 years and became an expert on getting possums out of roofs, identifying birds, pythons in toilets, even bees and spiders [not that they were native animals].

One funny incident was an elderly lady who thought she had a Rosella stuck in her roof. It kept chirping even at night and seemed to follow her into different rooms. This certainly wasn't sounding like a bird so I suggested she change the battery in her smoke alarm. I think I solved it!

These days I love painting portraits of people and animals and miniatures. Occasionally I get a commission and sell some work. I am still volunteering for Wires & taking care of birds.

Wendy Agzarian

Memories of June Kegg

From Betty Goodger



An article on June Kegg's Violin by her brother, Rod Fielder, appeared in the September/October 2015 issue of our Newsletter.

Memories flooded back to me, not of a violin, but of the gentle lady, who stood beside me in the front row of our exercise class each Friday morning in the Oatley Seniors Club Room.

Our instructor was Norma Straney, a Senior herself, of an old Oatley family, who did not retire from this class until leaving the district, aged in the 90s!

But in earlier days she was an instructor with the famous Bjelke Petersen physical education classes. Her Oatley pupils attended classes in the local Uniting Church hall – and who played the piano rhythmically for those classes? June, whose musical talent extended to another instrument.

Many of the ladies who joined us on Friday mornings had sent their daughters to Norma's classes and there was much merriment when we attempted to touch our toes or march around the room in time to the music, which now came from a small radio player – not a piano. Our class still keeps in touch for lunch occasionally and June is remembered fondly.



News and Events

History Week 2016: 3-11 September, Theme: **Neighbours.**

History Council of NSW has a number of events/excursions which may interest, such as *Cockatoo Island Convict History* Tour and tour of Reynolds' Cottages – *There goes the Neighbourhood* (The Rocks). For information check admin@historycouncilnsw.org.au or ring 9252 8715 to book.

Closer to home we have our own **Garry Darby** speaking at the newly refurbished Rockdale Library. His topic is *The History of Sans Souci* and the talk is on Tuesday 6 September starting at 10am. It is free but bookings should be made - www.rockdale.nsw.gov.au/Library/Events or ring Garry on 95839916.

RAHS Day Lecture – *Kismet – the Australian Gallipoli POWs*. 7 September, 1.00 – 2.00 pm at History House, 133 Macquarie St. Sydney. Free event.

Sydney Mechanics School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Ph 9262 7300 – Tom Keneally Centre always worth a visit – do your research there or just enjoy the peace and quiet!

Talk on Tuesday 20 September, 12.30 – 1.30 pm – Sue Liu – *Accidental Aid Worker*. A true story - talk in the Mitchell Theatre, free and no bookings necessary

Hurstville Library – **Author's talk by Jane Eales** – *Secrets, Spies and Spotted Dogs*, memoirs of a WW11 British Spy. The talk is on Wednesday 31 August (I am hoping this reaches you before then) at 7 pm. Free but bookings essential 9330 6111.

Hazlehurst Art Gallery, 782 Kingsway, Gymea – **Exhibition** *Treasures of Australian Art 1890 to 1950*, The Howard Hinton Collection. Key works by legendary Australian artists, Open now until 9 October.

Day of note! 9 September 1754 was the day William Bligh was born. Bligh was of course Captain of HMS Bounty where a mutiny took place in the South Pacific in 1789. He was later to become Governor of NSW until his governorship was overthrown in 1808 after less than two years.

Wednesday 17 August was the day of the Society tour of the ABC at Ultimo which I think I can say with confidence, we all enjoyed. The ABC centre was a surprise, it is huge and employs over 2000 staff. After the tour we lunched at the ABC café, also enjoyable. These are a few of the memories to share:



Filming for "The Checkout"



Our guide explaining the complex technology



Guess who wanted to be Leigh Sales, in her chair.



The severed head in the props department!



The wig department – a small part of it.

And more photos of **happy times** when we celebrated Beverley Earnshaw's OAM with lunch at the St George Motor Boat Club:



Thank you to Miryam Rodriguez who took the photos and is therefore not in them!

Stop Press: Mavis Ward, our President, is currently in hospital with broken ribs after an accident on the way home from the ABC tour. We wish her a very speedy recovery.

